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## We are Easter People!

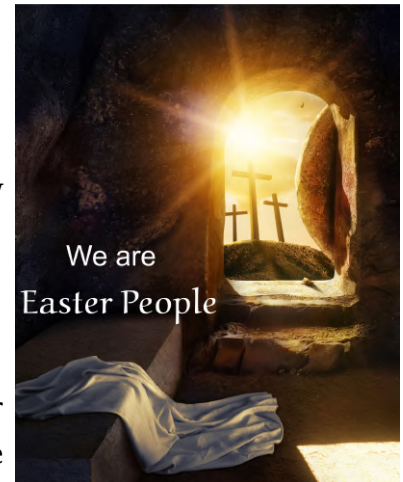
On Good Friday we are reminded,

“Don’t rush ahead to Easter. Linger at the cross. Take it in.”

Easter was last Sunday. We had a great, joyful celebration. But now what? Let’s start with reminding ourselves,

“Don’t rush on from Easter. Linger at the empty tomb. Take it in.”

It has often been said that Christians are *Easter People*. We are Easter people because our faith and hope is grounded in, based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yes, indeed, we *are* Easter people!



But what does that mean in practical terms? We get some clear guidance as we look at Jesus’ appearances recorded in the four gospels after His resurrection. Consider just three results for us from those appearances.

When the two Marys ran from empty tomb on Easter Sunday to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen, Jesus met them. His first word to them was “Rejoice!” He told them, “Be joyful! Be filled with joy!” Keep on rejoicing!” Beyond the initial joy of seeing their master alive after His death on the cross, there is the joy of all that Jesus said, promised being proven true. He *is* the Messiah, the Savior who gives life with God now and forever. How can we who were separated from God and under His just judgment for our sin now not be joyful? And not just for Easter Sunday, but every day. Easter people can and should be joyful every day.

A second word that guides us is *peace*. When Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of disciples He told them, “Peace be to you.” Yes, as Luke tells us, they were both “startled and frightened”, and “thought they were looking at a spirit.” But beyond that initial surprise and response, Jesus’ resurrection brings the peace He promised to give those who follow Him. As Easter people, knowing the resurrected and living Christ we can have peace today, everyday, whether it is good or bad, because Jesus is with us. We are secure in His care always, forever. Easter people can and should be people filled with, controlled by, living in Jesus’ peace.

Then as Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples reclining at a table, He reprimanded those who had not seen Him to that point for not believing those who had seen Him after He had risen. But Mark tells us Jesus went right on to tell them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” Easter people not only have Jesus’ joy and peace, they also have a mission to fulfill. We may be more familiar with Jesus restating it before His ascension as recorded by Matthew,

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Easter people have a mission to fulfill to our world. As Luke reports in the opening chapter of Acts, we are to be Jesus’ witnesses both near and far, “as far as the remotest part of the earth.” We fulfill that directly and personally wherever we find ourselves, and also as we pray for, encourage and support others in different places. Easter people have a mission to fulfill.

While there is much more involved, these are three practical aspects of being Easter people.

Don’t rush on from the empty tomb to the *old normal*. Stay at the empty tomb and live in the *new normal* as one of Jesus’ Easter people.

Pastor Lyle